

# Legislative Report

**By Fisk Outwater,  
NCNGA Legislative  
Committee Chairman**

With the historical elections behind us and the holiday season and the New Year approaching, it would be easy to breathe a sigh of relief and take a break from political matters as we turn more towards festive thoughts. Reality, however, says to me that while it's not yet time for pressing our legislative issues, it certainly is time to put our house in order, set and fine tune our priorities, and, most importantly make certain that we have an effective plan in place to demonstrate to the General Assembly who we are as an Association. And, for the most part I feel comfortable with where we are with these plans. However, there is one problem that needs attention.

As I have said in the past, you are the key to our legislative efforts. We rely on your grass roots support to help inform the General Assembly members about our priorities. As an Association we have more than 15,000 NCNGA members, however, we have e-mail, addresses on less than 10 % of you. And, of the roughly 1,200 e-mails that we do have; less than 5% of those have made contact with their legislators over the past two years. We have powerful tools such as Capwiz and the Internet to help keep our legislators aware of our priorities, but they are ineffective if we can't reach you. You are our most powerful tool, individually and collectively. If we have your e-mails, we can keep you better informed on the issues and let you know when help is needed to support these issues. We can even provide you with pre-worded messages and a direct line to the General Assembly.

The benefits that we strive for, and that have been painstakingly achieved over the years, require hours and hours of planning, formulating, and nurturing. Meetings must take place, and publication of Association activities must be done. This is done, for the most part, by a small dedicated full time staff, an executive body and its committees, and a few members who can always be counted on to step up when they are asked to support issues involving the NCNG. The rest of our members are, at present, a very silent majority.

Fiscally, this is probably the tightest two-year span that the state and nation has seen since WWII. The immediate future does not give much indication that there will be any positive changes forthcoming. Scarce resources available to this state's legislature will be scrutinized and squeezed as never before. If we are to be effective in achieving our goals of improving our pensions, exempting Title 32 pay, establishing additional Family Awareness Centers and others, then our voice must be strong, unified, and convey to our legislators that we are deserving of their support. This will never happen

if less than 1% of our members are involved in the process, as is now the case. We must be heard above the many deserving organizations that will be lobbying for these resources as one loud, recognizable voice.

There are of course many ways to do your part. You can make a phone call. You can e-mail a message. You can mail a letter. You can visit a Senator or Representative at home or in Raleigh. You can work for the Association. You can talk to your fellow unit members and retirees and family members. You can attend the convention. You can invite legislators to speak about the Guard at the local organizations to which you belong. But for now, the easiest and most effective contribution you can make to help all of us is to make certain that the Association has your current contact information, most importantly, your e-mail address. If you don't have an email address, your best phone contact and mailing address is fine. Things can happen quickly when the legislature is in session. There is little time to establish a plan in the middle of a hurricane. It must be done ahead of time. The purpose of this article is to do just that.

When the long session of the General Assembly begins in January, I would like to have 80% of our members' contact information in our Association's database. If that happens, we will be in a much stronger position than most other organizations in the state to compete for limited funds. This is your organization. We, as your representatives, formulate priorities based on our best evaluation of current events at the time and from suggestions that we receive from you. The benefits that have been accrued over the years are significant and well deserved. Our problem is that while our arguments for additional benefits are valid and justifiable, they do not have adequate backing of a strong and unified group. And, without a system that allows us to keep in direct contact with you, to pass on information, and to solicit your support at crucial times, we appear weak and we will be just one more voice among many.

This is any easy problem to correct. Simply take two minutes to fill out the form in this magazine and mail it to us. Don't put it aside and say I will do it later. Do it now. *Or go online and send it to the Association's HQs.* We will be working during this brief time before January to have the best plan of action in place to garner support for our legislative issues and priorities. If we can walk into a senator or representative's office, and say we're there representing all the men and women of the NCNG, knowing that we have a database of 12,000 emails or more to support that statement, I'll guarantee you that they will not only listen to our message but they will hear it! If we can cross that threshold, we will be successful.

Please have a safe and joyous holiday season and a very prosperous New Year. And for all those of you who are deployed, or will be soon, and for the family members of deployed fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, grandfathers and grandmothers, nieces and nephews, please know that we are thinking of you during this very difficult time. We wish you all a speedy reunion.

## To: NCNGA Legislative Committee

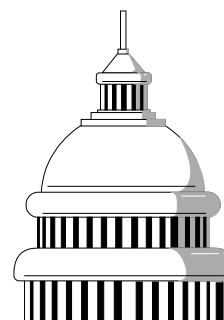
***Yes, you can count on me to help with our legislative endeavors!***

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_



Please send this form to: NCNGA, Attn: Legislative Committee, 7410 Chapel Hill Rd, Raleigh, NC 27607-5047 or fax it to 919-859-4990. You can also email the information to [ncnga@bellsouth.net](mailto:ncnga@bellsouth.net)